

Mineral Industry Surveys

For information, contact:

James F. Carlin, Jr., Tin Commodity Specialist
U.S. Geological Survey
989 National Center
Reston, VA 20192
Telephone: (703) 648-4985, Fax: (703) 648-7757
E-mail: jcarlin@usgs.gov

Elsie D. Isaac (Data)
Telephone: (703) 648-7950
Fax: (703) 648-7975
E-mail: eisaac@usgs.gov

Internet: <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals>

TIN IN MARCH 2006

Domestic consumption of primary tin in March was estimated to be 1% higher than that in February and 7% lower than that in March 2005. Consumption of primary tin for the first 3 months of 2006 totaled 9,240 metric tons (t), a decline of 5% from that in the comparable period of 2005.

The Platts Metals Week average composite price for tin in March was \$5.18 per pound, about 2% higher than that in February and about 5% lower than that in March 2005.

In Indonesia, publicly owned PT Tambang Timah, the country's leading tin producer, announced that it expected to produce about 40,000 to 42,000 t of refined tin in 2006, in line with the 42,600 t it produced in 2005. Owing to better maintenance and operating performance of its dredge fleet, Timah's offshore production is expected to increase to 10,000 t of tin from about 9,400 t in 2005. The balance is expected to come from tin concentrates from "unconventional" inland mining for which Timah expected intense competition from the 21 private smelters operating in the country. These private smelters, which used to supply crude tin to smelters throughout Asia, have upgraded their facilities and now have the capacity to produce 76,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) of refined tin (Platts Metals Week, 2006c).

In Japan, two major tinplate producers, Nippon Steel Co., Ltd., and Toyo Kohan Corp., formed an alliance to better penetrate the domestic beer can market, currently dominated by aluminum. The firms agreed to jointly procure tin to reduce raw material costs, share production facilities, codevelop can stock that would compete with aluminum cans, and collaborate on overseas business. In addition to collaborations at the operational level, the firms have also agreed to cross-hold shares. Nippon Steel will hold a 1.19% stake in Toyo Kohan,

while Toyo Kohan will hold a 0.15% stake in Nippon Steel. Nippon Steel's output of tinplate can stock for the domestic market is 450,000 to 500,000 t/yr and Toyo Kohan's output is 300,000 t/yr (Platts Metals Week, 2006a).

In Brazil, Paranapanema SA's new Rocha Sa tin property in the Amazon region was scheduled to begin production in October and produce 7,000 t/yr of tin and 3,000 t/yr of tantalum alloys. Paranapanema spent \$19 million on its tin properties in 2005, largely to develop Rocha Sa at the site of its Pitinga Mine (Platts Metals Week, 2006b).

In Singapore, reports indicated that the Singapore Tin Industries' new tin refinery was operating only at one-half capacity as a result of a lack of feedstock. The feed shortage was attributed to a longer-than-normal monsoon season in Indonesia. The smelter's capacity is 36,000 t/yr. The smelter is a joint venture of Yunnan Tin Co., Ltd. and Singapore's KJP International (CRU International, Ltd. 2006).

Update

On May 5, 2006, the Platts Metals Week composite price for tin was \$5.96 per pound.

References Cited

- CRU International Ltd., 2006, CRU Monitor—Tin: CRU International Ltd., April, 8 p.
- Platts Metals Week, 2006a, Japanese tinplate takes on aluminum-held beer can market: Platts Metals Week, v.77, no. 14, April 3, p. 1, 11.
- Platts Metals Week, 2006b, Rocha Sa to start in October: Platts Metals Week, v. 77, no. 14, April 3, p. 11.
- Platts Metals Week, 2006c, Timah holds 2006 tin output at 40,000-42,000 mt: Platts Metals Week, v. 77, no. 15, April 10, p. 3.

TABLE 1
SALIENT TIN STATISTICS¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

	2005	2006		
	January- December ^p	February	March	January- March
Production, secondary ^{e, 2}	10,800	900	900	2,700
Consumption:				
Primary	35,900	3,000 ^r	3,040	9,240
Secondary	10,800	694	698	2,080
Imports for consumption, metal	37,500	2,080	NA	NA
Exports, metal	4,330	428	NA	NA
Stocks at end of period	5,400	5,330 ^r	5,430	XX
Prices (average cents per pound): ³				
Metals Week composite ⁴	443.03	507.70	517.91	XX
Metals Week New York dealer	329.69	375.87	383.55	XX
London, standard grade, cash	304.00	355.00 ^r	359.00	XX
Kuala Lumpur	301.83	351.84	361.08	XX

^eEstimated. ^pPreliminary. ^rRevised. NA Not available. XX Not applicable.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices.

²Includes tin recovered from alloys and tinplate. The detinning of tinplate (coated steel) yields only a small part of the total.

³Source: Platts Metals Week.

⁴The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

TABLE 2
METALS WEEK COMPOSITE PRICE¹

(Cents per pound)

Period	High	Low	Average
2005, December	457.37	418.38	443.03
2006:			
January	521.70	492.15	503.78
February	517.39	499.65	507.70
March	533.89	508.89	517.91

¹The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges and a risk factor. It is normally substantially higher than other tin prices.

Source: Platts Metals Week.

TABLE 3
TINPLATE PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES¹

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Period	Tinplate waste (waste, strips, cobble, etc.) (gross weight)	Tinplate (all forms)			Shipments ²
		Gross weight	Tin content	Tin per metric ton of plate (kilograms)	
2005 ^p	W	2,270,000	7,670	3.4	1,860,000
2006:					
January	4,670	179,000	569	3.2	166,000
February	4,640	174,000 ^r	591 ^r	3.4 ^r	138,000
March	4,870	185,000	626	3.4	NA

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised. NA Not available. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits.

²Source: American Iron and Steel Institute monthly publication.

TABLE 4
U.S. TIN IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS¹

(Metric tons)

Country or product	2005	2006		January- February
		January	February	
Imports:				
Metal (unwrought tin):				
Bolivia	5,400	1,040	801	1,840
Brazil	2,150	100	51	151
Chile	20	--	--	--
China	4,510	256	217	473
Indonesia	5,220	1,400	413	1,820
Malaysia	1,530	--	50	50
Peru	18,300	1,570	500	2,070
Thailand	45	--	25	25
United Kingdom	67	--	5	5
Other	264	--	22	22
Total	37,500	4,370	2,080	6,450
Other (gross weight):				
Alloys	7,460	973	1,090	2,060
Bars and rods	1,030	91	86	177
Foil, tubes, pipes	8	(2)	(2)	(2)
Plates, sheets, strip	324	25	11	36
Waste and scrap	3,530	558	154	712
Miscellaneous	3,310	158	250	408
Total	15,700	1,810	1,590	3,400
Exports (metal)	4,330	412	428	840

-- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

TABLE 5
CONSUMPTION OF TIN IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FINISHED PRODUCT¹

(Metric tons of contained tin)

Product	2005		2006						
	January	December ^p	February			March			January-
			Primary	Secondary	Total	Primary	Secondary	Total	March
Alloys (miscellaneous) ²	1,240		137	--	137	138	--	138	380
Babbitt	276		19	W	19	17	W	17	55
Bar tin and anodes	275		26	W	26	26	W	26	77
Bronze and brass	3,700		172	136	308	175	139	314	926
Chemicals	8,680		754	W	754	754	W	754	2,270
Collapsible tubes and foil	W		W	W	W	W	W	W	W
Solder	12,200		625	250	875	623	250	873	2,800
Tinning	740		38 ^r	--	38 ^r	42	--	42	149
Tinplate ³	7,670		591 ^r	--	591 ^r	626	--	626	1,790
Tin powder	W		W	--	W	W	--	W	W
White metal ⁴	W		W	--	W	W	--	W	W
Other	1,070		41	8	49	42	9	51	182
Total reported	35,900		2,400 ^r	394	2,800	2,440	398	2,840	8,620
Estimated undistributed consumption ⁵	10,800		600	300	900	600	300	900	2,700
Grand total	46,700		3,000 ^r	694	3,700	3,040	698	3,740	11,300

^pPreliminary. ^rRevised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other." -- Zero.

¹Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

²Includes terre metal.

³Includes secondary pig tin and tin components of tinplating chemical solutions.

⁴Includes pewter, britannia metal, and jewelers' metal.

⁵Estimated consumption of plants reporting on an annual basis.